

**THE NATURE OF DAVID'S KINGSHIP AT HEBRON:  
AN EXEGETICAL AND THEOLOGICAL  
STUDY OF 2 SAMUEL 2:1–5:5**

Name of researcher: Christian Vogel  
 Name of faculty adviser: Richard M. Davidson, PhD  
 Date completed: 2019

The account of David's reign at Hebron found in 2 Samuel 2:1–5:5 constitutes a somewhat neglected, yet crucial part of the David narrative, chronicling David's first years as king. This dissertation investigates these chapters by means of a close reading of the Hebrew text in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of David's kingship as it is presented in this literary unit.

The review of scholarly literature on 2 Samuel 2:1–5:5 conducted in Chapter 1 reveals that not much attention has been given to a careful and in-depth exegesis of this literary unit. Instead, most of the examined studies have focused on redactional and/or historical issues in order to demonstrate the pro-davidic ideology of the narrative. Though a few studies have examined 2 Samuel 2:1–5:5 from a literary perspective, none of them have dealt exclusively with this part of the David narrative or with the specific issue of the nature of David's kingship in this literary unit.

Chapters 2–4 are therefore dedicated to a careful exegetical analysis of each of the six literary units within 2 Samuel 2:1–5:5. Particular attention is given to the literary features of the text such as its structure, keywords and phrases as well as intertextual connections to earlier parts of the David narrative and of the Old Testament in general. For each of the six literary units the implications concerning the nature of David's kingship that emerge from a close reading of the text are noted.

In Chapter 5 the results of the research are summarized. The exegetical analysis demonstrates that 2 Samuel 2:1–5:5 is a carefully crafted work of art throughout in which the kingships of David and Ish-boshet/Abner are compared and contrasted. Based on the close reading of the passage, the following conclusions are drawn concerning the nature of David's kingship:

1. The legitimacy of David's kingship is affirmed. He is chosen by YHWH, recognized by Saul and the people, associated with the faithful Saul, qualified by his character, personality and experience, as well as by the special title מֶלֶךְ.
2. Foundational elements of David's kingship include divine guidance, obedience to YHWH's will and law, justice, unity, freedom of choice, respect and kindness toward others, concern for the people, humility and proper self-assessment, צְדָקָה and repaying good with good, sorrow over evil, peace, strength and continuity.

- 
3. The purpose of David's kingship is to enable a return to the Edenic model by finishing the conquest, saving Israel from its enemies and caring for YHWH's people and inheritance.